Philosophy of American Literature

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SKETCH

OF

THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

GREENOUGH WHITE, A.M.

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PREFACE.

THE following outline is an attempt to prove the independent and organic development of American literature. The author has often heard persons otherwise well-informed speak apologetically, even contemptuously, of their country's literature, as a mere pallid reflection of literary fashions beyond the Atlantic. Were it such, there could be no more telling criticism of American intellect; no clearer proof could be afforded of a supposed degeneracy of the race when transplanted to American soil, and of the worthlessness of our civilization; for literature is an index of the worth of nations. But the apology is unnecessary, the sneer ignorant; the statement is not true and never has been. Bradford and Hooker, Edwards and Franklin, Channing, Emerson, and Hawthorne, Webster, Prescott, and Motley, were not intellectual parasites.

It is easy to explain the origin of this misconception. The failure of the Protectorate put an end to the Puritan ideal in England, and in sharpest contrast with it were the habits of thought introduced by the restoration of the House of Stuart, — habits of late and gradual growth in New England, hardly perceptible, indeed, by the keenest scrutiny before the beginning of the eighteenth century. Hence the advance of thought

in America has been, historically, about one generation behind each corresponding advance in England, and thus appears merely imitative to the superficial observer.

Our literature has really developed with admirable freedom, energy, and completeness. It has not been dwarfed by those influences nor have its epochs been cut short by those political and international complications that have so often thwarted mental progress in other lands. It shows the natural unfolding of intellect freed from old-world trammels yet limited by the necessities of practical life. Its growth has been dynamic, and is fruitful in suggestion to one who studies the rise of new literary and artistic forms to suit newly developed wants.

It has been our task to show how intimate is the connection between our country's literature and history, and how essential is a knowledge of each in order to interpret the other. Yet to prevent misunderstanding it is necessary to add that this is not a sketch of American history (though it is hoped that the principles that guide historical progress have been clearly presented), nor does it aim to give details concerning the lives of our authors, but simply to discover the position of each in our general literary history. Finally, the scope of the essay does not permit mention of living authors, but the attentive reader will readily perceive where notices of their works might be inserted.

CAMBRIDGE, November, 1890.

SKETCH

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PHILOSOPHY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE.

I.

As we begin our study of American Literature we meet a mass of writing difficult to classify, claimable by both Englishmen and Americans, consisting chiefly of narratives and descriptions of the natives and products of the New World; often enlivened by passages inviting emigration thither, or refuting and denouncing certain slanderous reports then current concerning the country. Such are the accounts of Virginia and New England by Captain John Smith; Alexander Whitaker's "Good News from Virginia"; William Wood's "New England's Prospect"; John Hammond's "Leah and Rachel"; George Alsop's "Character of the Province of Maryland"; Thomas Ashe's "Carolina"; and many others.

Before placing these works at the head of American literature we should subject them to a rigorous scrutiny. It is clear that the mere place of composition cannot determine where a book belongs, else we should have to yield Irving's "Sketch Book" to English literature. Nor can the subject decide our classification; else we

must resign "Bracebridge Hall," taking in exchange Miss Martineau's work on American society, and Professor Bryce's "American Commonwealth." Indeed, if the subject is all in all, we might maintain that our literature began in the year 1584 — when Arthur Barlow wrote his pleasing account of Carolina for Sir Walter Raleigh. The accidents of place and subject evidently cannot decide the point; we must have recourse to the character of the writer. Did he live in England or America? If England was his home, no matter how far he travelled; if he wrote exclusively for Englishmen, no matter what his topic; there can be no question as to where his work belongs. The writings named above, therefore, must be classed as English books about America; not as literature, for no one would include Hakluyt's collection in a course that dealt with Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, and their great contemporaries. Yet because those colonial narratives have always been of peculiar interest to Americans, and have been much read by them, we may put forth a certain claim to them; not permitting our antiquarian zeal to attribute to them a literary value they do not possess. The highest praise we can give them (and this is due especially to Wood's "New England's Prospect") is that they contain a few echoes of the sonorous prose of the Elizabethan age.

A remarkable fact now demands explanation. Why was there such absolute dearth of native authorship in the colonies of Virginia and Maryland during the first century of their existence? This dearth cannot be explained by the difficulties and dangers generally incident to colonization; its cause must be sought in the char-

acter of the colonists themselves. This is significantly revealed by the incitements to emigration penned by Smith, Alsop, and others. Desire of gain was the magnet that drew the first settlers to those shores, — a desire artfully appealed to by Captain Smith in his allusions to pearls found in mussels, and "rocks interlaced with many veins of glistering spangles." He knows well, he says, that nothing but the hope of gain can ever attract settlers to the coast of New England. Alsop, in his fanciful and flattering style, abounding in indecent allusions, would entice men to Maryland by the promise of a fortune, or by far more corrupt and degrading suggestions; women he would allure by promise of immediate marriage.

Such being the inducements to emigrate, what wonder is it that Sir Josiah Child called the settlers of Virginia "vagrants, vicious and debauched, gathered up in the streets of London and other towns"? Even John Hammond, writing in the middle of the seventeenth century, in defence of Virginia and Maryland, complains of the sloth and carelessness of their inhabitants, and admits the truth of the charge that they were once a "nest of rogues and dissolute persons," while he asserts the superior quality of later emigration thither. The author of "Virginia's Cure" (a pamphlet addressed to Archbishop Sheldon) complains of the general lack of schools, and says that out of fifty parishes scarcely one-fifth enjoy regular ministrations, and he laments the poor attendance of the people upon the services: "they attend once a week, sometimes not at all — on account of heat in summer, cold in winter," etc. The "cure" can only be, he says, by "reducing her planters into towns."

When we reflect upon the anarchy of those early years, necessitating the proclamation of martial law; the insurrections and revolutions (especially in Maryland); the terrible want, the starvation leading even to cannibalism; the strain of convict blood in the population, and the idleness (fostered by slavery), the ignorance and irreligion of the inhabitants; the centrifugal force in settlement, owing to lavish grants of land, and the culture of tobacco; we see clearly that all incentives to literature, and the will and ability to write, were utterly lacking in the southern colonies, during the first period.

II.

In sharpest contrast to this state of things, in every particular, do we find the history of the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Much has been made of the two or three degrees of latitude separating Virginia and Maryland from New England. It may be that the climate has stamped our northern literature and art with a certain autumnal melancholy, but it cannot account for their origin. Let us rather consider the all-important point, — the Puritan spirit.

We institute no invidious comparison, but state a simple truth, when we affirm that the Puritans lived on a higher plane, totally different from that of the Virginians. The former were heirs of the Reformation, as the latter were not. The Puritans had entered upon a stage of reflection, of enfranchisement of the individual and overmastering dread of anything that might again enslave the spirit, or corrupt its hardly won liberty, whether it were monarchy, the hierarchy, sensuous art, or sensual nature. With this fear was mingled a saddening sense of shortcoming, and finally a mute regret at the failure of a great ideal. This is the key to their history; their resolute determination to surmount nature; their self-righteousness, and conceit of God's peculiar favor, leading to amazing credulity; their sense of the responsibility of each for all, resulting in ruthless inquisitiveness, painful confessions and torments of conscience; the frightful publicity they gave to secret

sins; the revolting examination of the bodies of those accused of witchcraft; their remorseful introspection, and despondency declining into mania.

The best literary production of the Puritan Age in New England is the first, — William Bradford's "History of Plymouth Plantation," — the corner-stone of American literature. Here is a work written by an American for Americans and always exerting a powerful influence upon them; a work inspired by a high purpose; of lofty moral tone; exhibiting great patience under much suffering, Christian forgiveness, mutual helpfulness, and unlooked-for tolerance. It has, too, a literary charm of which Winthrop's "Journal" is utterly devoid. Bradford reveals the brighter side of Puritanism; Winthrop, the darker. Winthrop is implacable; would have no correspondence with the banished Coddington, and is ever seeking instances of divine judgment upon revilers of the Puritans: he is morbid; monstrous births, confessions of sin, and the like (which Bradford would merely mention and pass by as too terrible to dwell upon) exert over Winthrop's mind a baleful fascination; he gives details with nauseating minuteness, and finds a dreary satisfaction in chronicling these manifest judgments of God upon sinners.

History and biography are, of course, characteristic products of a people who believed profoundly in God's guidance of individuals and states. The Autobiography of Thomas Shepard — one of the most eminent men of that age — is an interesting and valuable little book.

The department of literature in which the Puritans took the most passionate interest, but in which, for ob-

vious reasons, they have left little of perennial worth, was theology and anthropology. Above and apart from the interminable and unreadable controversies of Cotton and Williams, above his own sermons — grouped under the titles of "The Soul's Humiliation — Implantation — Exaltation" — stands out a short work by Thomas Hooker (the courageous and great-souled founder of Hartford), called "The Poor Doubting Christian drawn to Christ." It is a treatise important for the light it throws upon the spiritual agonies of that age, and it merits study nowadays as an answer to one of the most difficult problems in pastoral care. "We must not look too long," says Hooker, "nor pore too much or unwarrantably upon our own corruptions within: such a course is a sinful course." Through every chapter shines forth the author's buoyant and indomitable nature, terrible and threatening to bold sinners, exquisitely tender and encouraging to the penitent. Here and there are fervent exclamations in the rapt spirit of St. Francis of Assisi: "In a holy humility labor to contend with God, and by a strong hand overcome the Lord; for the Lord loves to be overcome thus." This wholesome teaching was balm to many a sick soul; the book was in constant demand and passed through seven editions within a century.

The years included by the publication of Nathaniel Ward's "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," and of Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," make up the darkest indiction in the history of Massachusetts; a period marked by the supremacy of Endicott and Norton, — by the adoption of the Cambridge Platform, the hanging of the first witch, the banishment of Henry Dunster,

and the persecution of the Quakers; fitly ushered in by Ward's grotesque production, a diatribe against religious toleration, women of fashion and their dress, the Irish people, etc. An "Interpendent" himself, Ward would gladly exterminate all who do not agree with him. His ludicrously venomous spirit, his senile grumbling, argue for universal toleration more powerfully than he could ever have foreseen. John Norton was for several years his assistant at Ipswich.

In the year 1650 Anne Bradstreet's poems were published — "curious works, trimmed with quaint expressions." Her inspiring subjects are the Four Humors ("choler, blood, melancholy, flegme"), the Four Elements, the Four Ages of Man, the Four Seasons of the Year, and the Four Monarchies.

> "What gripes of wind my infancy did pain,
> What tortures I in breeding teeth sustain!"

sings the First Age of Man.

> "The cramp and gout doth sadly torture me,
> And the restraining, lame Sciatica,
> The Astma, Megrim, Palsy, Lethargy,
> The quartan Ague, Dropsy, Lunacy," —

says the afflicted Third Age.

The Four Seasons begin each with a little astronomy. In vain we look for a single truthful touch; everything is tasteless and conventional. In spring, "the primrose and violet deck the earth *like lace*"; in September

> "The orange — lemon dangle on the tree;
> The pomegranate, the fig, are ripe also."

Resolutely the "poem" lumbers on, — it must finish its stint. In November, we are told: —

> "Beef, Brawn, and Pork are now in great request,
> And solid meats our stomacks can digest."

In finer vein is a short piece called "Contemplations," which really possesses a certain sweetness and naturalness, though disfigured by such classical allusions as "Neptune's glassy hall"; "Thetis' house" (to which the Merrimac glides).

An extraordinary work, by reason of its subject, and terribly literal treatment, the ballad measure in which it is composed, and its wide and long-lasting influence, is Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom." No one who has not read this diabolical poem can thoroughly understand the Puritan spirit. Its metre is that of the Old Bay Psalm-book: —

> "They have their wish whose souls perish
> With torments in hell-fire."

> "If for our own transgression
> Or disobedience
> Divine justice offended is," etc.

(Note the leonine rhymes.)

The souls of all men are represented as passing before the judgment seat of Christ. They are grouped into eleven classes, — the heathen, young men, babes, etc. The lost souls (who are, of course, vastly in the majority) argue their case with Christ; but he "readily replies," refutes their arguments, and puts them to silence.

> "Unto the saints, with sad complaints,
> Should they themselves apply,

They're not dejected, nor aught affected
With all their misery . . .
Now such compassion is out of fashion
And wholly laid aside."

The grim determination to transcend all natural feeling has never found more dreadful expression than here:

"The pious father had now much rather
His graceless son should lie
In hell with devils, for all his evils
Burning eternally."

The pessimism of the nineteenth century seems puny and insincere when compared with the ferocity of Wigglesworth. And yet he was (like Leopardi) a "little, feeble shadow of a man," says Cotton Mather. He loathed his "vile body, subject to decay." He wrote a "Song of Emptiness" and a "Farewell to the World." Yet listen to the last words of this singular being, faintly murmured on his death-bed: "For more than fifty years I have been laboring to uphold a life of communion with God."

Passing rapidly over the writings of the time of King Philip's War, especially commending Benjamin Tompson's "New England's Crisis" and Mrs. Rowlandson's "Narrative of her Captivity," we come to Cotton Mather, in whom the Puritan age culminated and came to an end. It was left for him to write the lives of the founders of New England, and to gather them, with vast stores of information, anecdotes, legends, etc., into one encyclopædic work, the "Magnalia Christi Americana." Such a work generally marks the close of an epoch. It is interesting to mark the mediævalism of Mather's

character, — his ascetism, his fasts and vigils, his minute observances, his doctrine of reserve ("I have concealed several memorable things," he says in his account of Margaret Rule's sufferings), his encouragement of confession ("I have recommended them to tell their minds to some person of discretion"), his vast erudition (his style, like Burton's, bristling with quotations), his lack of originality, his prolixity, and intolerable tediousness. The sixth book of the "Magnalia" (entitled "Thaumaturgus") is readable and highly amusing; the "Bonifacius" — a carefully elaborated "Essay to Do Good" — is a fair example of his style; his monstrous verbal coinages, his fondness for alliteration and quotation, his frequent digressions and difficulty in coming to the point, his quaint illustrations and fervent ejaculations. This essay contains much wise advice concerning the relations of life, conjugal, parental, etc. It is interesting to find in this old book directions to masters as to the treatment of their slaves, and a reference to the slave-trade as a "spectacle that shocks humanity." "Bonifacius" was not published, however, until ten years after Sewall's famous tract appeared. We take leave of Mather in Colman's words: "He was the first minister in the town, the first in the whole province of New England for universal literature and extensive services. In conversation he excelled, he shone. Of Death and Eternity he was ever speaking with pleasure and desire."

Having now passed in review a series of works that illustrate the Puritan character at different periods of its history; having in their pages become familiar with its struggles, first with the wilderness and the savages, then with the powers of darkness; having looked into

its heart and watched the conflict ever raging there; let us endeavor, as briefly as we may, to gain a conception of that character clearer and fuller than before. And first of all we notice, as a cardinal principle, a sense of God's dread sovereignty which made the Puritan reject all earthly kingship, making him an uncompromising democrat, and in matters ecclesiastical an independent. The guide he needed to save him from the excesses of Antinomianism, and to point out the will of God he so eagerly desired to know and obey, he found in the Old Testament, expressed in terms more explicit than in the New, and more susceptible of literal obedience. He loved to think of himself as one of the Chosen People, and to trace in the books "Exodus" and "Judges" an analogy to his departure from the Old World and contests with the heathen in the New. He idolized the Bible, as the last will and testament of a departed deity. With the awful menace of the Apocalypse ringing in his ears, he dared not add to the plain sense of Scripture, or subtract from it. Hence his suspicion and hatred of "new light." The principles of the Antinomians and Quakers undermined his profoundest convictions.

Herein is the key to his conception of nature. It was decidedly Manichæan. To the Puritans, God was very far off. Wigglesworth speaks of America as a den of devils, "a howling wilderness, with hellish fiends and brutish men, in darkness and the shadows of death and eternal night." Robert Calef declares that the Mathers, by their theory that "the devil has power of tempests, diseases," etc., make him out to be the governer of the world. Bradford says that some believed that Satan

had more power in heathen lands than in Christian. Sewall expresses a dread of Satan's anger. Degrading imaginations, pruriency, and puerile superstitions resulted from this. The diseased mind of the Puritan found signs and wonders in changes of the weather. In such an atmosphere, of course, science could not exist. What passes for such is marked by superstition, an expectation of meeting monsters, and an acceptance of fancies for facts upon the authority of the ancients. "We sailed by an Island of Ice," says Josselyn, "with Bays and Capes like high clift land, and a River pouring off it into the Sea. We saw likewise two or three Foxes, or Devils, skipping upon it." Josselyn was told of "a Sea-Serpent or Snake that lay quoiled up like a Cable upon a Rock at Cape Ann." "As to Mermaids," says he, "consult Pliny, Albertus Magnus," etc., etc. "Some being lost in the woods have heard such terrible roarings as have made them much aghast — which must either be Devils or Lions," says William Wood. For the rest, this "science" consists of catalogues of herbs and trees, insects, reptiles, fishes, birds, and beasts, with their uses. The Puritans were, naturally enough, utilitarians. "The appearance of land [Cape Cod] much comforted us — so goodly a land and wooded to the brink of the sea." . . . "A good harbor and pleasant bay wherein a thousand sail of ships may safely ride." . . . "We saw whales, which, had we instruments to take them, might have made a rich return — which to our great grief we wanted." These views of nature have, of course, a profound influence upon literature and art. In Puritan literature nature is treated either with contempt or with insincerity (as mere ornament).

Anne Bradstreet calls the primrose, daisy, and violet "cold, mean flowers"; and Samuel Wigglesworth writes of the "verdant grove," the "flowery bank and silver streams" (rhyming with "enameled greens").

The Puritan abhorrence of art can be partly accounted for by association; their arch-enemy, Laud, was conspicuous as a restorer and beautifier of churches. Italy, Spain, and Flanders — the sources of art — were Romish countries; and in the Puritan mind idolatry and the arts were inseparably connected. Shirley, King Charles's favorite dramatist, and several lyric poets became Romanists. Moreover, the lives of Lope da Vega, Caravaggio, and Guido Reni were by no means edifying; and the arts of sculpture and painting were steadily declining in the hands of Bernini, the Caracci, and Guercino. George Herbert speaks with disgust and despondency of the vices of Italy, and the contamination of England, and prophesies the flight of true religion to America. Bradford mentions the "Italian manner" as if it were a synonym for corruption. During their sojourn in Holland, the Pilgrims must often have been shocked by the fleshliness of Rubens and the frivolity of Jordaens. But after all, Hooker's "Doubting Christian" offers the most satisfactory solution of the problem. A frame of mind so piteously introspective and self-involved utterly incapacitates for artistic production. As a matter of principle, too, the Puritans objected to the "overcostly building and adorning of temples," to "effeminate music, stage-plays, mixt dancing, amorous pastorals, face-painting, love-locks, luxurious Christmas-keeping, New-year's gifts, May-games, and such like vanities — mere sinful, wicked, unchristian pastimes,

cultures, and disguises." To worship God in a molten or graven image was to be punished by death, according to Cotton's laws of the year 1641; and "the very art of making pictures and images is an occasion of idolatry." So the spirit of Puritanism expressed itself in their architecture — square meeting-houses with hipped roofs and belfries; their sculpture — gravestones with winged death's-heads in low relief; their poetry — epitaphs and elegies; their decoration — whitewash; their music — the "lining out" of psalms.

The Puritans quoted freely from Greek and Roman authors, yet despised them as heathen. "We are wiser than they," said Winthrop. "Purge the schools of Homer and such books," said Mather. As naked heathen the Indians impressed and shocked them; they saw no beauty in the graceful and athletic forms of the red-men. "These poor naked men" appeared to Shepard "the saddest spectacle of degeneracy." "Disobedience and the counsel of the devil have made men so." Yet now and then some one would be captivated by the wild, free life of the forest, and be lost for a while to obedience and propriety; as was the case with a certain Ashley of whom Bradford tells. On the other hand, some Sachems were once induced "to wear their hair comely, as the English do." Rarely do we find even such qualified praise as in this sentence of William Wood's: "They are more amiable to behold (though only in Adam's livery) than many a compounded fantastic in the newest fashion."

As regards the sectaries with whom they came in contact, the Puritans seem to have been incapable of distinguishing between human beings and doctrines, —

of pitying and bearing with the thinker while condemning his opinions. It should be said, however, in extenuation of their conduct, that in that outspoken age singular opinions commonly led to libel and breach of the peace, and that the union of church and state in their system of government caused schism to be confounded with treason.

Another remarkable characteristic was a perception of the responsibility of each for all that riveted the social order, and impressed upon it that centripetal tendency which has had deep and far-reaching results throughout American history. Bradford, among the entries in his history for the year 1632, tells of the reluctant separation of the church at Duxbury from that of Plymouth, and shows how the people at Plymouth tried to retain the emigrants to Green Harbor in their religious assembly. This separation, he says, "I fear will be the ruin of New England." The Puritans always remembered that "Am I my brother's keeper?" was the question of Cain. The consequences of this feeling were often ludicrous or disgusting, or almost incomprehensible to us at the present day; as, for example, the publicity given to offences against nature; the minute supervision of families by magistrate and pastor; the public prayers, carefully adapted to the state of the persons prayed for; the "covenanting to watch over one another, in coming into the church"; the public confessions, and detailed accounts of religious experience and conversion. "Much is right," says Plato, "which it is not right to talk about." One of the glaring evils of this tyrannous surveillance was "mental reservation" and hypocrisy. A significant remark is

that of Francis Higginson, to the effect that Henry Dunster might have kept the presidency of Harvard College if he had been shrewd enough to conceal his heterodox opinions.

The enthusiasm of the fathers of New England for education is easily understood. They founded schools and a college, because education is the development of the individual, and this they regarded as their duty. Nor did they fear knowledge, for it was through that that they had attained their freedom; and they believed that if only the world were sufficiently well instructed, it would agree with them.

The learning of the Puritan age, like that of the schoolmen, was vast and unassimilated. It was characterized by lack of literary discrimination, by a Boethius-like mingling of verse and prose, by uncouthness and formlessness. Cotton wrote against set forms of prayer. "The attempt to substitute formlessness for form," wrote Lanier, "is simply to substitute bad form for beautiful." From this point of view our literature is the history of progress toward more and more beautiful forms.

The Old Bay Psalm-Book stands as a proof of the important fact that the Puritans possessed neither imagination nor humor. If further proof is wanted, read Woodbridge's Elegy on Cotton, or the following lines from an elegy on Alice Bradford: —

> "She now with holy Abram hath attained
> A good old age. Her life was never stained
> With any sin that any one could call
> Remarkable, notorious, capital."

We grant them the possession of fancy, abundant and ill-regulated, tending always downward into mere in-

genuity. They had a passion for anagrams. Thus Richard Mather was welcomed to Boston as "a third charmer," Mrs. Hutchinson was looked up to by her disciples as "the non-such," and every one wondered when Mrs. Bradstreet was found to be "deer, neat An Bartas." The Puritans were fanciful and ingenious; wonder and horror they knew, but not imagination; they were sardonic, not humorous.

We hasten to bring to a close our notice of the literature of the first age.

Conditions in the colony of New York were for several generations unfavorable to the cause of literature. Shortly after the appropriation of New Amsterdam by the English, a pleasant little book, "A Brief Description of the Colony," was published by Daniel Denton (the son of a Connecticut clergyman), who had removed to New Amsterdam many years before. It is doubly interesting, as being the work of the first among many New Englanders who have labored to promote the cause of literature in New York, and as supplying to our early literature that gayety and sensuousness which otherwise it would sadly lack. The description of the strawberry festival and that of the marriages and carousals of the Indians are quite in Irving's vein.

Toward the close of the seventeenth century Gabriel Thomas, a Quaker, brought out a brief but somewhat ambitious account of Pennsylvania and West New Jersey. This seems to be one of those books that occupy debatable ground, — neither wholly English nor wholly American. Thomas gives interesting information concerning George Keith, the agitator. He writes persuasively of West Jersey for "encouragement to the Idle,

the Slothful, and the Vagabonds of England, Scotland, and Ireland to hasten thither, — having no Plot in my Pate, or deep design, no, not the least expectation of gaining anything by them that go thither." He naively remarks that "Christian children born here are observed to be better-natured, milder, more tender-hearted than those born in England." Although the Quaker suspicion of human learning (like the feeling of the Puritans toward art) exerted a depressing influence upon intellectual effort, only dispelled by Franklin, their peaceful character has profoundly impressed American literature and life.

III.

We now enter upon investigations of extraordinary interest, concerning the principles of the development of our literature throughout a majestic cycle, beginning early in the eighteenth century, and ending about the time of the second war with England. Politically speaking this might be called the consolidative period. There was manifest among the colonies a tendency toward more intimate relations with the British crown, and a faint at first, but steadily strengthening tendency toward union with each other, under the stimulus of foreign aggression, first of France and Spain, then, chief of all, of England herself, then of England and France in turn. Intellectually considered it was a period of analysis, of criticism, of attempt to distinguish between the real and the apparent, to get at the ground of things, the substrate of all phenomena. Its habits and methods and ideals were in striking contrast with those of the Puritan age. It looked out rather than in. It felt a new joy in existence. It gave dignity to science, exploring the world of sense and the world of mind, investigating their laws, and attempting to explain the principle of their connection. Reverence for law and faith in its power was a controlling principle of the age; hence the curiously external and formal character of its morality, — the self-imposed resolutions, the codes of laws regulating every thought, word, and deed, of which the rules of conduct of Edwards and Washington are familiar and

conspicuous examples. And finally, the mind of man sported in its sense of freedom and power, planning how it might impress itself upon nature and society, and create for itself an enjoyable environment.

It is a pleasing task to trace the beginnings of this interesting revolution of the mind. The charter granted to Massachusetts by William III. made liberal movements possible within that colony. The witchcraft panic (that paroxysm of declining Puritanism) gave rise to latitudinarianism, disbelief in miracles and in eternal punishment. In 1699 the liberal Colman was installed as pastor of the Manifesto Church, in Brattle Street, Boston. Another victory of the new spirit was the appointment of John Leverett as president of Harvard College. A reactionary movement, probably stimulated by the Mathers, was checked by the valiant and vigorous John Wise of Ipswich, a writer who should be carefully studied with reference to this epoch of transition. In 1709 a Quaker meeting-house was built in Boston. Meanwhile events were working a profound change in the political sphere. We should not overlook the importance of King William's War in bringing about a combination of Connecticut and New York in the expedition against Montreal, or of Queen Anne's in uniting Rhode Island and Massachusetts against Quebec; the importance of the increasing strength of the Leislerian party in New York, under the insolence and extortion of Lord Cornbury, and the famous declaration of the Assembly in 1708, concerning the grievance of taxation without the people's consent. Popular principles triumphed in Carolina in 1719. It is convenient to remember the year 1722 as marked by the victory of

liberalism all along the line. The Assembly of Massachusetts so wearied Governor Shute that he left for England; that of Virginia removed Governor Spotswood from the chair because he insisted upon appointing to vacant benefices; the Lower House of Assembly in Maryland declared that the people of that colony were entitled "to all the rights and immunities of free Englishmen." Jeremiah Dummer wrote a "Defence of the New England Charters," and Daniel Coxe of New Jersey proposed a plan of union of all the colonies. In Connecticut Timothy Cutler, rector of Yale, Samuel Johnson, one of the tutors, with others, announced their adhesion to Episcopacy, and sailed for England for ordination. In Boston Zabdiel Boylston, naturalist and physician, inoculated for the small-pox with distinguished success, and was defended by Benjamin Colman against the attacks of the bigoted and malicious. In the same year Jonathan Edwards was licensed to preach, and in the following Benjamin Franklin escaped to Philadelphia. From about this time, says Howison, the Virginian historian, "the observant reader of American history will mark a change in the feelings of the colonies toward each other. The coalescing movement began in New England." Said Franklin, "The first drudgery of settling colonies is over; now comes leisure to cultivate the finer arts and improve the common stock of knowledge."

A sense of the nearness of God, of his workings in nature, and of the indwelling of his Spirit in the human heart, seems to have been the deepest source of the regenerative enthusiasm of the age. "The Spirit of God dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints in some

measure after the manner of a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them," said Edwards. He belived that "love and delight" were "diffused through the universe." Very significant, in connection with both literature and science, are such passages as these: "I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance, and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things. . . . I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder-storm, and used to take the opportunity at such times to fix myself in order to view the clouds and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder." The following exquisite sentences, reminding us continually of Wordsworth, are from Mather Byles' sermon of May 3, 1739, on the "Flourish of the Annual Spring": "We may live more in one day now than in many that are numbed with frost and chilled by the rigor of the winter. . . . The opening of the earth by the plough, and the odors of the various blossoms scattered from every glowing tree around, conspire to call back the declining health or establish the sound constitution. The idle musicians of the spring fill the fields and the skies with their artless melody. Universal nature about us with one voice sings Alleluia aloud. Glory to God in the highest is resounded by every tuneful bird, every warbling brook and bubbling fountain. Incense to the God of Heaven is offered by every opening lily and glowing blossom which perfume the air with their ambient sweets. . . . The wide earth we tread on seems but one great altar, covered with incense and offerings to God its Maker." The sermon concludes with an

"hymn for the Spring." And here is a noble passage from a sermon of Samuel Hopkins: "When the mind is regenerate, the first thing that presents itself is the omnipresent and glorious God. Now the person finds himself surrounded with Deity, and sees God manifesting himself everywhere and in everything. The sun, moon, and stars; the clouds, the mountains, the trees; the fields, the grass, and every creature conspire in silent, yet clear, powerful, and striking language to declare to him the being, perfections, and glory of God."

Such an era should evidently be the starting-point of art, and so we find it. Pelham and Smybert, gracious figures both, found homes in Boston. Pelham was a portrait-painter and mezzotinter, and has left us likenesses of Cotton Mather, Colman, and Byles. Smybert came to our shores in Berkleley's company, laden with the culture of the Old World, yet modest and reserved, a man of purest motives, an amiable visionary. He painted a picture of Berkeley and his family — the first group done in America — and has preserved for us the lineaments of Jonathan Edwards. He opened the first studio in Boston. His portraits are delicately pencilled and of careful finish, but poorly modelled, flat, and dim in light and color; their pose is set, their flesh tints ashen. The colors are very thinly laid on. Pelham made engravings from several of these portraits, and gave instruction in drawing and painting; among others to Copley, his step-son.

A short poem called "Bachelor's Hall," by George Webb, a friend of Franklin's, shows fondness for nature and for music. We recall immediately Franklin's pleasure in the sweet and melancholy strain of the Æolian

harp. About this time, singing by note began to supplant the old "leading and lining" in many New England churches.

It is exceedingly interesting to note the beginnings of æsthetic inquiry in America. In this, as might be expected, Edwards takes the lead. He considers the nature of beauty; is it harmony and proportion? This does not satisfy him; he finds it in *being*, the supreme good, — the more being, the more beauty; until God is reached, the infinite being, infinitely beautiful. Hopkins discusses the subject of taste. This, he says, implies inclination of heart — the very idea of beauty consists in a sense of heart. "The beauty of holiness can be discerned no other way."

One of the most gratifying traits of the time is the new spirit of tolerance, of justice; the ability to distinguish between a man and an obnoxious opinion; to treat the former with courtesy, while ignoring the latter, or opposing it with humor and good-temper. This quality makes Franklin's account of the odd characters in his "Junto" doubly attractive. Other societies for mutual improvement followed the establishment of the "Junto." A debating club was started in Newport, R.I., in 1730, from which sprang, in course of time, the Redwood Library.

The name of Franklin (the greatest social force of that day) suggests the newspaper — another proof of the interest that men were beginning to take in their fellows. There were the "Boston News-Letter" (founded in 1704), and "Gazette" (1719), and "Courant" (1721), the "Philadelphia Mercury" (1719), the "Maryland Gazette" (1727), the "New York Weekly Journal"

(1733), and the "Gazettes" of Virginia (1736), North Carolina (1749), and Georgia (1763), and many others. These, with many allusions in contemporary writings, convince us that the people were beginning to concern themselves in intercolonial and foreign affairs; indeed, in the life of the world. And do not let us forget the life-work among the Indians of the devoted Brainerd, or the labors and travels of the single-hearted Quaker, John Woolman, in behalf of the slaves.

The most notable figure by far in the first generation of that era was Jonathan Edwards. In him we find its character comprehensively summed up. His sensitiveness and susceptibility to new ideas; his eagerness to discover the laws of the external world, and of the phenomena of sensation; his accurate observation of the habits of the spider; his fondness for walking in solitary places (he used to go to the woods to pray); his idealism (he wrote an ironical letter ridiculing the materialistic conception of the soul) — he held that "bodies have no proper being of their own, in themselves considered," and that substance is "He in whom all things consist"; his longing for union with God; his moral energy (he resolved "to live while I do live"); his determination to be temperate, benevolent, peaceable (what adjectives could better describe the character of Franklin?), — all these are exceedingly interesting and significant. An endeavor to distinguish between the real and the merely apparent, the genuine and the counterfeit, in religious experience, is the key to his treatise on "the Religious Affections." He was the first American whose thought reacted upon the mother-country; its effect in England and Scotland has been deep and en-

during. His "Narrative" of the revival in Northampton, in 1735, contains much that is of importance in connection with pastoral care. Many of the details of the extraordinary excitement of that and following years remind one constantly of the witchcraft delusion; both seem to have been a species of "possession" connected with that excitability which has been remarked as a characteristic of the American people. Edwards' doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit was the primary cause of that "awakening" which shook the colonies north and south, and gave rise to numbers of lay-exhorters and itinerant preachers of Whitefield's stamp, breaking down the barriers between parishes and forming new societies; and which infused into the churches a vital principle that brought about the decline of the Half-way Covenant, and ultimately the separation of church and state. Edwards' theory of history was that the world is to be shaken until that state is reached which is accordant to the will of God.

In middle life, after the fading of the beautiful vision of his youth, "the light that never was on sea or land," he began to give prominence to the doctrine of total depravity, wrote denunciatory, Wigglesworthian sermons, denied the freedom of the will, and hence could not treat of morals. He never perceived that relation between man and nature which is the ground of ethics and the highest art. His "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will" is the consummate triumph of an age of analysis, of the pure understanding. In the very year of its publication died Christian Wolff, a philosopher who suggested a satisfactory solution of the problem.

Edwards' style, though adorned sometimes by elo-

quent and beautiful passages, is for the most part (like Smybert's pictures) cold, colorless, and dry. It is, nevertheless, refreshment after a course in Puritan literature; for it is original, not cumbered with quotations, and is clear, pure prose. The distinction between verse and prose begins now to be observed.

Jonathan Dickinson, who left New England to become the pastor of a church at Elizabethtown, and was finally elected President of the College of New Jersey (the first of a series of eminent theologians and preachers who have held that office), has given proof of his controversial talent in his "Familiar Letters upon Important Subjects in Religion." It is to be observed that two of these are excellent arguments upon the Evidences of Christianity, — a topic unthought of and untouched in the previous age, — indicating the rapid increase of scepticism. Another is entitled "True and False Faith Distinguished," and is connected with the religious revival. Meanwhile, Charles Chauncey in Boston and Alexander Garden in Charleston were stemming the tide of Methodism. Dr. Chauncey, in his acute and vigorous "Discourse on Enthusiasm," shrewdly analyzes the character of the enthusiast (of such a man, for instance, as Davenport), and speaks sharply of the rise of numbers of lay-exhorters and teachers, both male and female, "all over the land." Garden controverts Whitefield upon Faith and Works (again the question of the real and apparent, genuine and spurious, of substance and phenomena), insists that faith produces works before justification and after, that the soul of man co-operates with the Holy Ghost in regeneration, asks whether Adam begot both the souls and

the bodies of his immediate posterity (thus raising the old question of Traducianism), and defends Archbishop Tillotson against the accusation that he had "only an historical faith, not an effectual belief." Other interesting and unexpected evidence of a reaction against the Calvinism of Edwards is afforded by his successor in the Presidency of the College of New Jersey, Samuel Davies, who attributed to the human soul the power to prepare for the gift of the Spirit. Davies went from the Middle Colonies to be for several years the pillar of Presbyterianism in Virginia. He was a fervent orator, probably the most eloquent of his age, except Whitefield and Wesley.

An important development of the time was an interest in historical study. Robert Beverley's entertaining "History of Virginia" reached a second edition in the year 1722; Thomas Prince gained a deeper insight than any of his predecessors into the significance of American history, and published in 1736 the first part of his "Annals" from the point of view of universal history; in 1738, John Callender pronounced his "Historical Discourse on the civil and religious affairs of the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations"; in 1747, William Stith, President of William and Mary's College, brought out his history of the settlement of Virginia.

It is impossible (even if we wished it) to include in our literature Ebenezer Cook's satire upon the province of Maryland. Cook was an Englishman who went to Maryland to fill his empty purse, if he could, — had several amusing experiences, was cheated by a Quaker, and left the province in a rage, with a foul gibe upon

its inhabitants, which proves that he was no "gentleman," in spite of his assumption of the title. Nor can we think of John Lawson's entertaining and valuable "Journal" and account of the natural history and the natives of Carolina as a beginning of literature in that part of the South. Speaking of the South Carolinians, Lawson says: "Their cohabiting in a town has drawn to them ingenious people of most sciences, whereby they have tutors amongst them that educate their youth à-la-mode. . . . Near the town is a fair parsonage-house, and the minister has a very considerable allowance from his parish." Yet in Charleston, where in many points society resembled that of New England rather than that of Virginia, we find no native literature. A certain blight seemed to steal over those scholars even who came from abroad. Ramsay remarks that Commissary Garden, considered to be as able and intellectual a man as there was in the colony, wrote only a few letters. South Carolina, more than any other colony, was based upon slavery. Ramsay says that the people were hospitable, and fond of music, dancing, and hunting; were exceedingly sensitive to criticism, and hence addicted to fighting duels; and were irritable, indolent, given to deep drinking, and incapable of long-continued exertion.

Hugh Jones, professor of mathematics in William and Mary's College, says that the Virginians were generally diverted from profound study; were inclined to conversation rather than books; were fluent, but of superficial learning. William Byrd, of Westover, states that "the southern colony thought their being members of the established church sufficient to sanctify very

loose and profligate morals." Of Edenton, then capital of North Carolina, he writes that there is "no church, chapel, mosque, synagogue, or place of public worship of any sect or religion whatever." "It is natural for helpless man to adore his Maker in some form or other, and were there any exception to this rule, I should suspect it to be among the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope and of North Carolina." He ridicules, too, the excessive indolence of the people. Byrd is, without exception, the brightest and most truly literary writer of the South during this period. He shows us vividly the easy and sensuous existence, the warmth and sprightliness of thought, of the Virginian gentleman of the old school. Delightful to us, famished and frozen by our sojourn in Puritan New England, are his admiration for nature, for flowers and shells; his fondness for a bath in the river; his habit of ludicrous exaggeration; even his broad humor and voluptuousness of tone. He has his fling at "the saints of New England, who carry off tobacco without troubling themselves to pay that impertinent duty of a penny a pound." He admires the figures of the Indians; Lawson, too, speaks of them as "well-shaped, clean-made people, tall and straight; . . . their legs and feet are generally the handsomest in the world."

After the death of Edwards, Franklin stands forth as the greatest American, representing the practical energy of the age, as the other did its theoretical and metaphysical. In striking contrast with the idealism and self-consecration of Edwards, and pleasingly complemental to these, are Franklin's economic teachings (political, municipal, and domestic); his literary and

political activity (as editor of newspaper and almanac; founder of clubs and associations, of a library and an academy; and as postmaster, statesman, and diplomatist); his philanthropic and scientific efforts (as originator of a fire-company, and a society for the abolition of slavery; as the inventor of the stove known by his name, and of the lightning-rod; and as introducing the willow-tree into boggy land in Pennsylvania). In his religious belief Franklin became a moderate Unitarian. His style is admirable, — perspicuous, easy, and humorous, — the first masterly prose written in America. Franklin himself attributed its best qualities to a faithful and diligent study of Addison; but his knowledge of French must have had great influence in perfecting it.

Mather Byles was the first sermon-writer who paid much attention to prose style. He, too, acknowledges indebtedness to the "correct, the delicate, the sublime Addison." He was somewhat magniloquent and fond of adjectives. He was a famous humorist in his day, renowned for his wars of wit with Joseph Green; but their parodies of each other's productions are tasteless and tedious nowadays.

William Livingston's "Philosophical Solitude" is perhaps the most important poetical performance of that generation. It is written in the style of Pope, whom the author greatly admired, in lines almost inevitably end-stopped, with cæsura carefully marked, and with abundant adjectives ("roseate . . . amaranthine bowers" — "gloomy yews, spiry firs . . . sylvan beauties . . . vernal blooms . . . aromatic sweets . . . crystal streams . . . embroidered fields" — the "rosy-bosomed spring" . . . "aerial mountains or subjacent glades"). He seeks

a wife (a "phœnix-woman") with whom to live in the midst of gardens and groves and delightful surroundings. With these, and plenty of good books, he thinks he can pass the time with philosophic content. His lines have frequently a voluptuous tinge, and well exemplify the mediocre aspirations of the eighteenth century. Other echoes of John Pomfret's "Choice" are the poems of the same title by Church, Elijah Fitch, and Mrs. Rowson. Livingston and Church realized their ideals at Elizabethtown and Raynham.

Livingston was prominent as a lawyer, and in 1752 issued a "Digest of the New York Colony Laws." The development of legal studies was doubtless fostered by the protracted controversies about boundaries that vexed every colony during that generation; by the debates over emissions of paper money in many colonies; and by contests with royal governors over taxation and salaries, in Massachusetts and New York, Virginia and South Carolina, and with the proprietors in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The colonial laws of Rhode Island were printed in 1719, and the criminal code revised in 1728. A new criminal code was introduced into Pennsylvania in 1718; and ten years later David Lloyd wrote his "Defence of the Legislative Constitution of the Province of Pennsylvania." There, too, William Bradford, the printer, struggled for the liberty of the press; and thence Andrew Hamilton, the most popular and eloquent pleader of his time, proceeded to New York to secure the acquittal of Peter Zenger, in 1735. In 1732 the laws of England were introduced into Maryland by the Assembly; and Nicholas Trott published the laws of South Carolina in 1734. Mention is made of several

other prominent lawyers in South Carolina. Gridley and Ruggles in Massachusetts, Sir John Randolph in Virginia, Charles Carroll in Maryland, were conspicuous in the profession. Robert Hunter Morris, chief-justice of New Jersey from 1738 to 1764, was "precise, methodical in practice, able in argument." The provincial laws of North Carolina were published in 1752. Pennsylvania possessed the best courts in the colonies; New York perhaps the poorest. In New York education was poor, and language very corrupt because of the numerous dialects spoken there.

A powerful impetus was, of course, given to the promotion of science by Benjamin Franklin; but interest in it was characteristic of the age, which had risen above the expectation of miracles so common in the previous century. Mathematics, astronomy, botany, and medicine were prosecuted with success. Thomas Godfrey, a glazier of Philadelphia, was so earnest a mathematician that he mastered Latin in order to read treatises on the subject in that language. He invented the reflecting quadrant known as Hadley's. In 1727, Thomas Hollis endowed a professorship of mathematics and natural philosophy at Harvard College, which John Winthrop held from 1738 to 1779. In 1740, Winthrop observed the transit of Mercury. He corresponded with Franklin upon the subject of electricity. David Rittenhouse discovered for himself the method of fluxions, in 1751. John Bartram, botanist and physician, laid out on the banks of the Schuylkill River, in 1728, a botanic garden, the first in America. John Clayton, too, was a physician and enthusiastic botanist. Medicine was studied zealously, because of frequent and terrible visi-

tations of small-pox and yellow-fever. Inoculation for the former was introduced into Pennsylvania in 1731. Dr. John Lining, of Scotland, published at Charleston, in 1753, a history of the yellow-fever. He carried to Charleston the first electrical apparatus seen there, and corresponded with Franklin. Dr. Thomas Cadwalader was the first to lecture on anatomy in Philadelphia. Cadwallader Colden was famous as a mathematician, botanist, and physician. He introduced the Linnæan system into America, and wrote a "Tract on the Fever."

Testimony as to the connection of the three learned professions, and the derivation of the legal and medical from the theological in that age, is given by John Trumbull, in his "Progress of Dulness" as follows: —

> "When each point of serious weight
> Is born with wrangling and debate —
> When truth, mid rage of dire divisions,
> Is left to fight for definitions —
> And fools assume your sacred place —
> It threats your order with disgrace,
> Bids genius from your seats withdraw
> And seek the pert, loquacious law;
> Or deign in physic's paths to rank
> With every quack and mountebank."

John Adams in his youth contemplated the study of divinity; Hugh Williamson, the historian of North Carolina, abandoned the Presbyterian ministry for the study of medicine; and these are but representatives of a general tendency.

An important change in education took place shortly before the American Revolution. This was the adoption of English courses — in rhetoric, oratory, and study

of style — into the curriculum of the colleges. Liberalism and English literature triumphed at Yale in 1766. Trumbull, their champion, was appointed tutor there in 1771. "The mere knowledge of ancient languages," he wrote, "of the abstruser parts of mathematics, and the dark researches of metaphysics, is of little advantage in any business or profession in life. It would be more beneficial, in every place of public education, to take pains in teaching the elements of oratory, the grammar of the English tongue, and the elegancies of style and composition." His "Progress of Dulness" is studded with hits at those who "gain ancient tongues and lose their own," "read ancient authors o'er in vain, nor taste one beauty they contain." "Is there a spirit found in Latin," he asks, "that must evaporate in translating?"

Nicholas Boylston, a merchant of Boston, left to Harvard College, at his death in 1771, fifteen hundred pounds sterling, to found a professorship of rhetoric and oratory.

Freneau wrote in defence of translations. Dr. Rush opposed the study of Greek and Latin, and argued that education should rather begin with geography and natural history. Jefferson caused professorships in divinity and the dead languages to be suppressed at the college of William and Mary, soon after the Revolutionary War, and others in law, science, and the modern languages to be established instead. In 1789 Noah Webster proposed his reform in spelling, and soon after the "u" was generally dropped from such words as "labour," "favour," and "honour," and "k" final from "publick," "musick," etc.

People trained to distinguish between the phenomenal

and the substantial could not be deceived as to the meaning of the acts of the British Ministry throughout the indiction preceding the battles of Concord and Lexington, — not even in such an insignificant matter as a paltry duty on tea. People accustomed to impose upon themselves the minutest regulations respecting the course of their daily life would not long endure the exactions and arbitrary conduct of an alien senate and its minions; people whose desire it was to make the world pleasant to live in would, when others failed, undertake the task themselves. The Declaration of Independence really declared that the colonies were out of their nonage.

The writings of the great orators and statesmen of the Revolutionary era afford abundant material for a pleasant and profitable analysis of fine prose styles. Generally speaking, we may say that these incline to a vocabulary of Latin derivation, and to periodic sentence-structure. They show restraint in the use of figures of speech, and are clear and forcible. Resembling each other in these important respects, they are yet distinguishable by subtle and interesting peculiarities. There is Otis, in whose cumbrous sentences and lack of rhythm can be observed the struggle of great thoughts through obstructive material; Quincy, whose use of short words and sentences, whose animation and imagery and balanced phrasing indicate greater mastery of style; Samuel Adams, whose clear, vigorous, abrupt sentences, abounding in dentals, reveal the dogmatic character of the man; Richard Henry Lee, whose elegance and lengthy periods, varied by an occasional fire of questions, evince the classical student; John Adams, whose buoyant nature is impressed upon a style characterized by trochaic and

dactylic rhythm; Washington, with balanced sentences of weighty, anapæstic tread, indicating ability to view a subject on every side, slowness in coming to a decision, and immovable determination when it is reached; Jefferson, with somewhat loose sentence-structure, with phrases and adjectives in triple groups, with frequent qualifications of statements, and expostulatory tone, giving an impression of ambidexterity and lack of candor; Jay, whose short and terse sentences, straightforward and clear as crystal, with scanty illustration, manifest the lucidity of his mind and the sincerity of his convictions; Hamilton, with triply arranged, commensurate clauses, smoothly flowing and with closing cadences, with sentences often involved, — all showing the subtle thinker, the not entirely upright and ingenuous character; and Ames, whose fervid, highly figurative style, and allusions to classic authors and study of Shakespeare, reveal supreme mastery of expression, but whose lack of substance points out that that majestic era of English prose was then coming to an end.

The verse of the era may be described as a product of the intellect set in commotion by the war, and directed by ambitious and patriotic desire. With amazing patience and fond credulity, the rhymers Dwight and Barlow elaborated their frigid epics, "The Conquest of Canaan" (amounting to nine thousand six hundred and seventy-two lines) and the "Columbiad" (with seven thousand three hundred and fifty). Just such works were produced in the age of Queen Anne by Sir Richard Blackmore. The "Conquest of Canaan," Dwight thought, possessed the same advantages as the Iliad

and Eneid! In his description of its hero is an allusion to the painter, West. Of the heroine we are told that

> "No vile cosmetics stained her lovely face."

An allusion to the death of Warren disfigures the account of the battle of Ai. The epic ends with a vision of future history, of America and the Pilgrim Fathers, of the Millennium and Last Judgment, and finally recurs to the battle of Gibeon. Enough of this execrable effort, which it is doubtful if any but the author ever read through. In 1794 Dr. Dwight brought out his "Greenfield Hill," terribly didactic, yet with readable passages. His object in this work was "to promote prosperity by poetry," yet he began it "merely to amuse his own mind." "'Twas dropped," he says, in superior style, "when other amusements presented themselves." He "designed to imitate the manner of several British poets"; he would reject much, but can't spare the time to look over it! Some of the parts are in the manner of Thomson and of Goldsmith; in one is an attack upon slavery. The style is bombastic, prophetic, filled with classical allusions (to Vertumnus, Flora, etc.). The third part is on the burning of Fairfield; the fourth, in Spenserian stanzas, treats of the destruction of the Pequods; the sixth contains the Farmer's advice to the Villagers: "He recommends an industrious and economical life, the careful education and government of their children, and particularly the establishment of good habits in early life; enjoining upon them the offices of good neighbourhood, the avoidance of litigation, and the

careful cultivation of parochial harmony." In the seventh part, the genius of Long Island Sound appears, with sea-green mitre and scaly mantle, and foretells the splendors of America.

Colonel David Humphreys, in his "Happiness of America: addressed to the Citizens of the United States," falls constantly into the stiff, conventional style of the eighteenth century; writes of "gelid breath," "umbrageous trees," "ambrosial balm," "hyperborean" or "vesperian skies." In telling phrase he alludes to Barlow as that "conscious genius bold." The performance includes one pleasing passage, — a description of domestic life in winter. Humphreys speaks of his pieces as "composed for amusement, with no thought of printing them; some may promote the glorious cause of liberty." Machinery, wool-growing, and commerce inspire his "National Industry of the United States," which opens with the auspicious invocation: —

"Come, then, oh Industry! possess my soul."

Joel Barlow's "Hasty Pudding," a short mock-epic, is his most readable production. The "Columbiad" — that "monument of genius and typography," illustrated by Smirke and dedicated to Fulton — is a "patriotic poem," says the author, "of a political tendency," — that is, "to discountenance the passion for war." "The moral tendency of the Iliad and the Eneid," Barlow gravely assures us, "is pernicious; Homer's existence was one of the signal misfortunes of mankind." Barlow admits that he has changed the order of battles, and has interpolated imaginary events, in order to increase the horror

of the havoc and miseries of war. "My object," he repeats, "is altogether of a moral and political nature"; and yet he exalts his subject, in that "the modern military dictionary is as copious and poetical as the ancient, and the shock of armies is susceptible of more pomp and variety of description." The notes which were to explain allusions in the text have been "forced to yield to typographical elegance," and been gathered together at the end of the volume.

The "epic" consists of descriptions of the geography of America, and a "prophetic" delineation of its history, vouchsafed to Columbus by Hesper, "the genius of the western world." It is rife with the offensive Latinisms of the eighteenth century, — "multifluvian bay" — "contristed Lawrence" — "cerulean robes" — "symphonious strains" — "the brumal year"; and with yet more shocking realism ("to increase the horror of war"): —

"Hot contagion issues from her box" (that is, Cruelty's, where the "meat is becoming putrid").

> "Flaming Phlegethon's asphaltic steams
> Streak the long gaping gulph . . . the tar-beat floor
> Is clogged with spattered brains and glued with gore."

To crown this monument of bad taste, Barlow becomes enthusiastic over Patience Wright's wax-works, which he exalts as "peerless art!"

Passing over the satires and burlesques of Trumbull, Francis Hopkinson, Lemuel Hopkins, Richard Alsop, and Thomas Green Fessenden (dull enough in themselves, but fascinating after our recent readings); and the "patriotic" lyrics "Hail Columbia!" "Adams and

Liberty," "The Star Spangled Banner"; and remarking that never before or since has our literature been so impressed into the service of politics; we come with surprise and a gasp of relief upon Freneau's lines to the "Wild-Honeysuckle" — the first stammer of poetry in America. We delight to linger over this little piece, consisting of only four stanzas of the sort known as "sesta rima," and in spite of its imperfections, read it over and over again until we find that we have learned it by heart. And it is worthy of our praise; the delight it shows in the simple beauty of the flower, embosomed in nature; the thought of the frosts of autumn, and regret for death, — are a foretaste of Bryant and a host of followers. We may read Freneau's volumes through, and find nothing to compare with this; some few pieces faintly recall it, but the vast majority of them are satirical and partisan in spirit. The same may be said of William Cliffton's poems; one of the best of these is a bacchanal song, but in an introspective mood he exclaims: "I hate the blatant world, — in some humble thatched cottage beside a fountain or on a hill, remote from care, I'll pipe away the sober evening." His casement, he tells us, shall overlook farms and pastures, a "dingle, a lucid lake with a torrent pouring into it." In this romantic spot, and with his beloved Monimia, he will lead a hermit's life. Cliffton died in 1799, at the age of twenty-seven. The edition of his poems published in the next year closes with a little cut of the setting sun, a barren tree, and a slanting tombstone with the word "FINIS" upon it, and a tuft of grass in front. He was "a delicate flower," said his friends, "'mid the rank herbage."

The advance of art in America in the last half of the eighteenth century was rapid and steady. Portrait-painting was still most remunerative; but a school of historical painting sprang up, and sacred subjects were attempted. Matthew Pratt of Pennsylvania studied portraiture, but had to contend against the prejudices of the Quakers, and was often reduced to decorating sign-boards for a living. Benjamin West soon abandoned that uncongenial soil, and became far more useful to his fellow-countrymen abroad than ever he could have been at home. In Boston, Copley was painting hundreds of good portraits. He gave attention to the backgrounds of his pictures — draperies or columns, or perhaps a distant view through a window — and to other accessories, especially such materials as silk, satin, velvet, lace and gold embroidery. These, with the increasingly easy pose of his figures, reflect the growing comfort of the age. Charles Wilson Peale went from Maryland to study under Copley, then visited England, and finally settled in Philadelphia. He was a versatile artist; modelled in wax, cast in plaster, painted miniatures and portraits of many historical personages, engraved in mezzotint, was a silversmith, politician, soldier, naturalist, and dentist. Trumbull was our chief historical painter, and tried classical and Biblical subjects; Gilbert Stuart, our finest portrait-painter, perfectly natural and easy, fearless in the use of color, and of wonderful freshness in flesh-tints. He inclined to ruddy hues, as Copley did to yellow.

At Williamsburg, Virginia, on the 5th of September, 1752, Lewis Hallam and the "American company" of players performed the "Merchant of Venice," the first

play ever given in the colonies by a regular company. In the summer of that year, a brick theatre had been erected in Annapolis; and in September, 1753, one was opened in New York with a performance of Steele's "Conscious Lovers," by Hallam's company. In the spring of the following year, Rowe's "Fair Penitent" was produced at Philadelphia; and there a theatre was built in 1759. About this time one was erected at Newport. In July, 1769, "Venice Preserved" was acted at Albany. A few years later the "Maryland Gazette" advertised a performance at Annapolis, "with a new set of SCENES." In the summer of 1773 a theatre was built in Charleston.

This progress of dramatic art had a certain effect upon literature. Thomas Godfrey the younger composed a turgid tragedy, "The Prince of Parthia," the first in America. Royall Tyler wrote "The Contrast," which satirizes social follies so severely that it can hardly be called a comedy; and William Dunlap, artist, actor, author, and historian, began to write a long list of plays.

Our survey of the literature of that age is concluded by mention of our first romancer, Charles Brockden Brown, and his extraordinary productions, "Wieland," "Arthur Mervyn," "Ormond," "Edgar Huntly," of which the last is the best. These are nightmare stories, written in an abrupt, spasmodic style; over them all hangs a dark fatalism, a sense of pursuit by some inhuman foe. To the careful reader they yield significant evidence of the materialism and immorality that ensued upon the close of the Revolutionary War. They are analytical and unhealthy. It is not surprising to

learn that Brown was an invalid. "Scarcely ever," he confesses, "have I known vivacity of mind." It is important to notice that he satisfied a sickly craving of the age. Fisher Ames protested against the "fashion in newspapers" of recording "loathsome and shocking details" of murders, prodigies, dreams, and the like. "The newspapers are busy spreading superstition." The age was restless, and vexed by uneasy dreams before the daybreak of pure imagination.

IV.

With the close of the War of 1812–15, a new era, extending to the Civil War, opened for the United States. It was ushered in by the rapid admission of new states, the purchase of Florida, the Compromise of 1820, and the "era of good feeling"; and was accompanied by vast increase of wealth and population. Relieved from foreign interference, the country was able to devote itself to internal development and its domestic affairs. The great questions of freedom and union, slavery and disunion, arose for settlement. Here is to be found the key-note of the period: it was an ethical age, and was introduced in literature by Channing's "Moral Argument against Calvinism," published in 1820. The transition between the period last studied and that now opening before us was effected in a remarkable way in another department of thought by the lectures and writings of several eminent jurists, — Kent, Story, Wheaton, and Greenleaf.

There appear to be two stages in moral development. The passage from determinism and egoism to intuitive ethics is through sensibility, and appeal to the emotions, the sympathies. This is eudæmonism, or regard for the happiness of others. The moral sentiment has worked itself free from self-love, but is still clouded by a sensuous tinge. The publication of an American edition of Adam Smith's "Theory of the Moral Sentiments," and Frisbie's review of it in 1819, are now perceived to be

memorable events in the history of American literature. Samuel Hopkins' identification of the will with the heart; his doctrine that the "whole of the duty and obedience of moral agents consists in Love exercised in a perfect manner and degree" (we know the influence of this upon Channing); Emmons' rule: "Preach with animation enough to produce a great excitement of the natural sympathies," — all prove that the inception of the new movement is to be looked for long before the date given above. The year 1820, however, is convenient to refer to as the time when the ethical impulse became finally dominant.

It wrought profound changes in theology. The doctrines of total depravity and the moral impotence of man, of the atonement and irresistible grace, were sure to be questioned, denied, rejected by some at such a time. Universalism arose, to discredit the appeal to the fear of hell as a motive to righteousness. The doctrine of the perfect humanity of Christ was now emphasized, and the New Testament was at last studied with more interest than the Old. The plenary inspiration of the books of the Bible was denied, and revelations of God began to be looked for elsewhere, especially within the human soul. "Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity," said Emerson: "You are open to the influx of the all-knowing Spirit." "The universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it," and "the world is an incarnation of God." "The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common." "The assumption that the Bible is closed is an error." Here we should not forget that Hopkins rose

above idolatry of the Bible: "Regeneration is wrought by the Spirit of God immediately," he said, "by no human means, not even by the Word of God."

A profound view of the relation between nature and man was a precious gift of the new spirit. Said Channing, speaking of the two places he chiefly haunted for study, one being the Redwood Library: "The other place was yonder beach, — my daily resort, dear to me in the sunshine, still more attractive in the storm. Seldom do I visit it now [1836] without thinking of the work which there, in the sight of that beauty, in the sound of those waves, was carried on in my soul. No spot on earth has helped to form me so much as that beach. There I lifted up my voice in praise amidst the tempest; there, softened by beauty, I poured out my thanksgiving and contrite confessions. There, in reverential sympathy with the mighty power around me, I became conscious of power within. There, struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth, as if moved to utterance by nature's eloquence of the winds and waves. There began a happiness surpassing all worldly pleasures, all gifts of fortune — the happiness of communing with the works of God." "The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister," said Emerson, "is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable."

Here originate the contemplative poems of Bryant, the real father of American poetry, the first who was in earnest with it. "Bryant endows inanimate nature with sentience — the severe test of a poet," said Poe. His lines beginning, "Oh, fairest of the rural maids" are an exquisite expression of the relation unfolded

above. Here, too, begins the landscape school of painting, with Doughty, Cole, Durand, Kensett, and Gifford. Geology and natural history were prosecuted with enthusiasm, and reacted upon literature through the medium of such works as those of Godman, Audubon, and Hitchcock.

Social relations were affected by the active spirit of the age, and many reforms were instituted. Radical changes in prison discipline were brought about in Pennsylvania and New York; temperance societies were organized, and multiplied rapidly; in 1822, Benjamin Lundy started the first anti-slavery journal, the "Genius of Universal Emancipation," and soon began to lecture on abolition; in 1829, Garrison assisted Lundy in editing his paper, — two years later founded "The Liberator," and, in 1832, the "American Anti-Slavery Society"; the question of women's rights began to be agitated; in the schools, corporal punishment was discountenanced; roseate theories of social regeneration were put into practice at New Harmony, Brook Farm, and Fruitlands; great enthusiasm was manifested for the cause of missions, — the Judsons labored in Burmah, — Robert Baird travelled in the south of Europe, striving to revive Protestantism there; and Peace Societies were formed; Elihu Burritt edited the "Christian Citizen" at Worcester in 1844, and in 1846 went to England to form the "League of Universal Brotherhood."

An important point to notice is the revival of interest in the literature and art of Italy and Spain (especially in the years 1820–1840), and a deepening appreciation of the thought of Germany and ancient Greece (through

the decades 1840–1860). The last was doubtless fostered by sympathy with the Greeks in their struggle for freedom; a feeling which found noble expression in Halleck's "Marco Bozzaris." Homer began to emerge from the obscurity to which he had been consigned by Mather and Barlow; and was edited and annotated by Felton in 1833, with the illustrations of Flaxman. In 1840 Felton published a translation of Menzel's "German Literature"; and shortly after edited Isocrates' "Panegyricus" and Æschylus' "Agamemnon," and selections from the Greek historians. He travelled in Greece in 1853–1854. "The Roman character has had its sway long enough," said he, "and it is time the Greek should take its turn." With this idea it is interesting to connect the rise of the art of sculpture in America; the classic style of Horatio Greenough, the ideal figures of Powers. The model of the "Greek Slave" was finished in 1839; the same year Crawford designed his "Orpheus."

The age gave rise to an ideal of culture of which Channing's essay is a beautiful exposition. Two famous orations on "The American Scholar" were delivered, — Verplanck's at Union College in 1836, Emerson's at Cambridge in 1837. Sympathy with the people is the key-note of the first: "Your studies must have an interest for others, — the greatest are not solitary scholars." Yet "America is propitious to independence of thought." Verplanck condemns the intolerance of partisans of late years, and urges independence of party for the good of all. The turbulence of Jackson's administration probably disgusted many whose energies would otherwise have sought an outlet in politics, and diverted them into

the paths of literature. Emerson bade his hearers not to idolize a book, or be over-influenced by genius. Self-confidence is the note of his oration. The scholar should trust himself and be brave, should domesticate culture. "If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts and there abide, the huge world will come round to him." "Is it not the chief disgrace in the world," he asks, "not to be an unit?" So powerful was the impetus to independence of thought and breadth of culture that several scholars (notably Everett, Ripley, and Emerson himself) abandoned the ministry to become lecturers, critics, and men of letters.

A pleasing freshness and impulsiveness of youthful sentiment invest the "era of good feeling." Interesting young people like Drake, Eastburn, Sands, and the Davidson sisters, wrote poetry profusely; and their early deaths caused much lamentation. Poetry was a "delightful amusement" to the bashful Eastburn, author of "Yamoyden." Some portions of that poem were "hastily added and printed as soon as written," by Sands, who assures us that he is "perfectly indifferent as to *his* reputation, but could not bear to see this joint production, consecrated by the death of a friend, meet with unfair criticism or sullen neglect." It is a strain

> "The last that either bard shall e'er essay."
>
> "Friend of my youth! with thee began my song,
> And o'er thy bier its latest accents die."

The subject of "Yamoyden" is the love of an Indian for a Puritan girl. The action takes place in the time of King Philip's War. It is composed in the octosyllabic measure of Walter Scott, but with occasional

variations — notably a dithyrambic to the "Manito of Dreams." The hero's form, his "martial head," his "polished limbs," were "free and bold, and cast in nature's noblest mould." One canto begins, characteristically, with an address to evening.

With such effusion of sentiment, and with imagination airy or passionate (as in Drake's "Culprit Fay" and Mrs. Brooks' "Zophiel"), was ushered in the new literary epoch. It was the fashion to muse upon love, old letters, evening, autumn, grave-yards, and the past. There was fierce contest with "base-moulded souls," with "clay-cold, lukewarm, half-hearted souls"; much "clasping of grief," and brooding over wrongs, and hunger for sympathy. Nowhere is this spirit so vividly reflected as in the pages of old annuals, then extraordinarily popular, such as the "Token," edited by Goodrich; the "Talisman," by Bryant, Verplanck, and Sands; the "Gift," the "Rose," "Friendship's Offering," etc. These were illustrated, often by good artists, and were made up of reveries upon "Moonlight," "Wild Flowers," "Tears," "The Twilight Hour," "Memory," "The Fall of the Leaf"; sonnets "To Hannah More," or "On the Death of a Child," or "To a Beloved Parent on her Recovery from a Dangerous Illness," or "On burning a Packet of Letters"; and tales of wonder or terror, "The Mysterious Wedding," "The Bandit of the Alps," "The Strange Mariner." Children, too, must have their little annual: "The Rosette," containing "The Neglected Bird," "A Dirge for a Young Girl," "The Fading Rose," "The Swan's Melody"; or good Mrs. Sigourney's "Olive Leaves," with its "Childhood's Piety" and "The Dying Sunday-School Boy." Mrs. Sigourney wrote

"Biographies of Pious Persons," "Letters to Young Ladies," "How to be Happy," "The Weeping Willow," and very much more. It was the day of marble gravestones, with weeping willows drooping over urns above the name and "life's brief date," the text and pathetic stanza. Eliza Leslie describes a piece of embroidery the design of which "is a tomb with a weeping willow and two ladies with long hair, one dressed in pink, the other in blue, holding a wreath between them over the top of the urn. The ladies are Friendship. Then on the right hand of the piece is a cottage and an oak, and a little girl dressed in yellow, sitting on a green bank and putting a wreath round the neck of a lamb. Nothing can be more natural than the lamb's wool — it is done entirely in French knots. The child and the lamb are Innocence." "I know the piece well," said Gummage; "I've drawn them by dozens."

Though now the "subject of a passing smile," those forgotten annuals did good work in their day. They cultivated a taste for art, and encouraged the composition of sketches, essays, and short stories — literary forms of great value. Many of the first efforts of authors who afterward became conspicuous appeared in those gift-books.

Essay-writing, criticism, reviewing, were favored by the magazines that now began to appear. Brockden Brown had been a pioneer in this department, through his "Monthly" and "Literary" magazines. The "North-American Review" was established in 1815; the "New York Mirror" in 1853; the "New England Magazine" in 1831; Hoffman's "Knickerbocker Magazine" in 1832; and the "Dial" in 1840. It is necessary that in an age

of authorship a running comment of criticism should accompany production; and probably Poe's papers, "The Literati," published in the "Broadway Journal," helped to correct too great exuberance, though their amazing personalities would not be tolerated at the present day. This personal element (so strong, for instance, in Willis' "Pencillings by the Way") was a peculiarity of the time.

Beside Channing, Allston and Irving were probably the most prominent personages of their day. Allston exercised a wide and cultivating influence, greatly extended the area of art, and lent, by his elegance and good-breeding, a dignity to the artist's profession which it had previously lacked. He painted scriptural subjects in brilliant color, after the manner of Titian; landscapes like some of the Dutch masters and Salvator Rosa; marines in the style of Joseph Vernet; and literary subjects, drawn from the works of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Scott. Hence it will be seen that he lacked originality; his work was assimilative, tentative, irresolute, and thus mirrors the "form and pressure" of the time. His languishing "Rosalie" expresses its ideal. Allston wrote verses, "The Sylphs of the Seasons," and a romance, "Monaldi," of æsthetic and didactic tendency. In this the characters of Fialto and Maldura are intended to show how sensuality and ambition harden the heart; and here again appears Rosalia, the feminine ideal.

James Gates Percival — poet, scholar, and philologist, botanist, geologist, chemist, and surgeon — was another of the versatile characters of the period whose work is marked by diffuseness and indecision, whose aims were high and execution inadequate.

The department of didactic fiction was cultivated by Miss Sedgwick (in "Redwood," "Live and let Live," etc.). With her may be compared Miss Cummins ("The Lamplighter," etc.). Works of this class are constructed upon one general plan: the moral element has to be mingled — to make it palatable — with lavish sentiment; and stock devices are employed to arouse the emotions of sympathy, alarm, hatred, and so forth, — the introduction of an attractive invalid, cripple, or blind girl, as a leading character, and collisions of vessels, conflagrations, runaway horses, or other accidents, with burglaries, embezzlements, suicide, and murder. The list of subjects in the annuals may be referred to as illustrating this union of moral and sensational elements.

Of all authors, Irving was perfectly suited to the taste of the time, insomuch that the epoch included by the publication of his "Sketch-Book" and of his "Life of Margaret Miller Davidson" might well be called by his name; he was its essence. That his influence was not powerful, every one admits; but it was certainly pervasive. In one word, he was sympathetic; and his sentiment was kept from declining into sentimentality by his playfulness and fine sense of humor, while it was preserved from evaporating in mere revery by benevolence and desire of approbation. His work falls under three general heads: provincial or generic, historical and biographical, and viatic (dealing with travel and adventure), — the first of which is represented by the "Knickerbocker History of New York" and the tales in the "Sketch-Book," — "Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"; the second by the "Con-

quest of Granada" and the lives of Columbus and his companions, of Mahomet, Goldsmith, Washington; and the third by the "Tour on the Prairies," "Astoria," and "Adventures of Captain Bonneville." Only in the works of the first class (his earliest) is he truly original and of perennial interest, but by these he became the father of a number of genre artists, — Mount, Inman, Darley; and of the most flourishing school of American fiction (of which Thorpe, in his admirable sketches of the quaint habits and humors of the dwellers by the Mississippi, is a good early representative). In the works of his middle style, Irving proved, like Allston, the attraction that Southern Europe had for the mind of his generation, — in his case especially Spain, — and thus he became the progenitor of Prescott and Ticknor. And finally in his third style he co-operated with Cooper in producing a series of brilliant narratives of voyage and adventure, such as the works of the younger Dana, E. K. Kane, and Bayard Taylor.

We like to think of Irving as taking his ease, in the autumn of his life, at Sunnyside, — a name that instantly suggests "Idlewild," "Undercliff," and other pleasant and picturesque homes of literary men, and recalls the labors of the genial Downing — our first landscape gardener — in elevating the taste and beautifying the estates of wealthy Americans.

A vast number of historical novels upon the colonial and Revolutionary periods, and border romances, were produced in the time of Irving, all showing the influence of his style, and generally referable to one or another division of his writings. Such are Paulding's "Puritan and his Daughter" and "Dutchman's Fireside"; Bird's

"Calavar" (a tale of the conquest of Mexico) and "The Nick of the Woods"; Kennedy's excellent works, "Rob of the Bowl," "Horse-shoe Robinson," and "Swallow Barn"; and of a younger generation Motley's "Merry Mount"; John Esten Cooke's "Virginia Comedians" and Theodore Winthrop's "Edwin Brothertoft" and spirited "John Brent." These works were also influenced, as was implied above, by J. Fenimore Cooper, whose novels can be similarly classified: "The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish" (a tale of colonial New England), "The Spy" and other romances of the Revolution, and the fine series of tales of the wilderness and the sea, beginning with the "Pioneers," the "Prairie," the "Pilot," and the "Red Rover." Meanwhile, W. Gilmore Simms was producing in swift succession his stories of the South: "Vasconcelos" (a tale of De Soto), and the "Yemassee"; the "Partisan," "Katharine Walton," and others upon the time of the Revolution, with "Guy Rivers," "Richard Hurdis," "Border Beagles," and "Beauchampe" — dealing with the strange, semi-civilized society of the South at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present. These latter tales resemble each other in construction, character-sketching, scenery, and repulsiveness of subject. Simms struggled bravely to build up a literature in the South, composed poems, dramas, histories, and biographies, edited Shakespeare and many magazines, wrote criticisms and reviews, and delivered orations and lectures, all in vain. The proud and indolent planter, "who neither cared for nor thought of seeking public applause for his writings," who was then intent upon sustaining a social condition "based upon the great physical, philosophical, and moral

truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man, and that slavery is his natural and normal condition"; who in his "truly provincial vanity and prejudice" fancied that his type of civilization was the highest in the world, "frank, brave, elegant, chivalrous"; could not and would not produce works to be submitted to Yankee criticism; and to have his "peculiar institution" alluded to in novel, newspaper, or magazine, "galled his kibe." Long ago, even before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, George Mason of Virginia saw and said that "slavery discourages arts."

The only art that could flourish in that atmosphere — unoffending because of its inarticulateness — was music; and Gottschalk, the greatest pianist our country has produced, expressed in strange dance-tunes and in the harp-like, melancholy chords of his "Last Hope" the restlessness, the lurking sadness, and what there was of hidden sweetness in the spirit of the South.

In the city of Baltimore literature was upheld by the lyric poet Pinkney, by Kennedy, and Poe. The latter is the completest literary exponent of the South, in his passionateness and insubordination; his wretchedness breaking forth in fitful, sardonic laughter; his intemperance and pessimism. John Randolph, a moment before his death, traced on a scrap of paper the word "Remorse"; and what but a symbol of remorse is Poe's "Raven"? What but an allegory of the burial of conscience and ruin resulting therefrom is "The Fall of the House of Usher"? No one can read the "Dream within a Dream" without finding in it a piteous and painful confession of moral impotence, or the "City in the Sea" without perceiving a dread expectation of a

steadily advancing and tremendous crisis. In many places this feeling finds utterance in a nervous shriek of weakness and despair. In his benumbing sense of the pursuit of a relentless fate, Poe reminds us of Brockden Brown, — indeed, he stands on no higher moral plane. This is a point of extreme importance; the South seems always to have been just one degree behind the North in spiritual development. Poe's keen sensitiveness to criticism either of himself or of his writings is a noteworthy trait. The melody of his best poems is haunting, but tended ever to degenerate into mere mechanical jingle. His tone is spirituous, never spiritual. Alone among our poets, Poe links us to European literature by his musical despair — so similar to that of Leopardi, Pushkin, Heine, Lenau, Petöfi, and De Musset (all descendants of Byron).

In pleasant contrast with the pessimistic Poe, stands the man whom he assailed with fanatical vehemence highly amusing in its inappropriateness, — the gentle, optimistic Longfellow, the Irving of poetry. Longfellow had to endure, too, sharp criticism from the Transcendentalists, and was perhaps a belated singer; but he was keenly alive to impressions of beauty, and his writings delicately register the advances of culture in his day, passing as they do from Spanish scenes and subjects (the "Spanish Student") to mediæval and German (the "Golden Legend"), and finally to American ("Hiawatha"). He will always be a favorite with readers who are passing through a phase of generous and healthy sentiment.

James Marsh's edition of Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection," with prefatory essay and explanatory notes;

an eager interest in the works of Goethe, aroused by his death in 1832, and by the writings of Carlyle; an acquaintance with German thought ("a philosophy," said Hedge, "which has given such an impulse to mental culture and scientific research, which has done so much to establish and to extend the spiritual in man and the ideal in nature"); the new Hellenic learning, especially the study of Plato; and (adds Emerson) "the influence of Swedenborg and of phrenology," — may all be alleged as causes of that remarkable phenomenon known as Transcendentalism. To us, these appear rather as symptoms of that profound change, that new emancipation of the individual from the chains of custom, which was finally to free the country from obsequiousness, timid deference to public opinion (noted as a striking characteristic by Miss Martineau), and sensitiveness to English criticism, — all of which marked the sentimental epoch. The root of Transcendentalism may be found at home. As long ago as 1819, the weakness of Adam Smith's theory of morals had been pointed out by Levi Frisbie, when he said: "In judging of our own conduct, we thus refer to the opinions of other men." Here the significance of the decline of the practice of duelling in the North, and its persistence in the South, becomes apparent. In 1823, Channing exclaimed: "Let others spin and weave for us, but let them not think for us. Shall America be only an echo of what is thought and written under the aristocracies beyond the ocean?" In the same year the Monroe Doctrine was promulgated. In 1837, Cooper broke forth in irritation against submission to popular opinion; there has been quite "too much deference to the control of the public," said he.

Finally, the great thought came, the apprehension of the moral law and of the indwelling of the Universal Spirit in the hearts of men (justifying poor Mrs. Hutchinson and the persecuted Quakers of old time), enfranchising the imagination, — if that be the shadowing forth of spiritual things by material, — and working a fusion of God, nature, and man. This was the enthusiasm that carried the nation through four years of fearful war.

Jones Very stands, a singular and noteworthy figure, in the dawn of this spiritual renascence. He was instructor in Greek at Harvard College in the years 1836–1838, and in the latter year underwent a remarkable religious experience, under the influence of which he composed his profound and limpid sonnets (in the Shakespearian, not the Petrarchian form), which place him indisputably at the head of all American sonnetists. Very is, so to speak, the pineal gland, the point of union of emotion and pure thought, in which may be studied the passage of the sentimental into the transcendental epoch.

The latter might as well be called the Emersonian period, for its inspiring vision was Emerson's. "The universe becomes transparent," he exclaimed in ecstasy, "and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the circumference. Man's victorious thought reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will — the double of the man. Spirit alters, moulds, makes nature. Build then your own world. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. A nation of men will for

the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine soul which also inspires all men."

Margaret Fuller well reveals the fervent and exciting influence of the new idea. Bronson Alcott and Miss Fuller by their conversations, and Sylvester Judd by his "Margaret: a Tale of the Real and Ideal," gave it currency, and instructed the inquiring mind of that generation.

What a vindication of Anne Hutchinson and the Quakers is Emerson's declaration of the need of a new revelation! "Tradition characterizes the preaching of this country," he said. "The pulpit is usurped by formalists. The assumption that the Bible is closed is an error. Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?" But then follows his fatal error, — the rejection of personality, of form, which so impedes and injures his utterance both in verse and prose. He preferred to think of God as "It." He lacked the Hebraic spirit which he discerned in Very. Emerson has well been called Hellenic, Oriental, cosmical; he had reached a level of thought that enabled him to appreciate and sympathize with antique conceptions. But of Christianity he said: "It has dwelt with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus. The soul knows no persons." Emerson halted between two opinions, realism and nominalism. His metaphysics were those of Parmenides; his ethics, of Protagoras. This explains his obscurity, his inconsistencies. "The world is an incarnation of God" — "One mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool," he said on the one hand;

"There was never so great a thought laboring in the breasts of men as now; the doctrine, namely, of the indwelling of the Creator in man." But then the fatal flaw, — "the personal is unspiritual." And so on the other hand he said: "The Poet imparts spiritual life to nature. This thought which is called 'I' is the mould into which the world is poured like melted wax. It is simpler to be self-dependent: if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts and there abide, the huge world will come round to him." Emerson's "instincts" might perhaps be safe guides for him, — but how about Napoleon's, Cæsar Borgia's, Caligula's, or Sargon's? This lack of a standard in ethics proved the perplexity and peril of his followers: Brownson sought refuge in the Church of Rome; Theodore Parker, acting out the doctrine that "God incarnates himself in man, in Jesus, in you or me," pushed on to a bald psilanthropism. Perhaps the conceit of Parker and Thoreau made the idea less dangerous, by revealing its falsity and ugliness. Thoreau, that "suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable," that "answer to the theories of the socialists," was a *reductio ad absurdum* of the premises of individualism.

After the subsidence of a little sun-worship, however, and other "untaught sallies of the spirit," the people addressed themselves in earnest to the heavy task before them. The Mexican War was certainly a transcendental affair, only to be justified by appeal to some "higher law" than that of nations. When the grave questions resulting from it pressed for speedy solution; when the long and subtle sorites of Calhoun, starting from an assumption of the ineradicable selfishness of man, ended

in a recommendation of the Polish Constitution; Henry Clay, the great reconciler, the orator of sympathy, summoned his party to one supreme effort, was re-enforced by the majestic Webster, who, looking forward rather than back, saw the inestimable value to the Union of more years of peace; and the Compromise of 1850 was carried. With Clay and Webster, in 1852, died the Whig party; the idea of the transcendentalists, Garrison and John Brown, that "higher law than the Constitution," was left in possession of the field, and entered "practical politics" in the persons of Seward and Sumner; and by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the contest in Kansas, the Dred Scott decision, etc., the soul of the North was slowly aroused for the "irrepressible conflict." These are the years when Hawthorne produced his marvellous analyses of the most fearful passions that can agitate the human soul. Sin must come up for investigation in an ethical period; Hawthorne's subjects are the mysteries of iniquity and of holiness embodied in human forms. That such pure art should have sprung up in such a turbulent period is still one of the wonders of literature.

V.

When the struggle between abstract morality and self-interest, between the unity of intelligence and the multiplicity of passion, was over, the nation entered upon a new career of great promise and grave responsibilities in an era not yet belonging to history. In the midst of seemingly chaotic material progress, and advance of the natural sciences, it is difficult to see clearly what results of recent authorship are likely to be of permanent worth. After the war, Bryant, Longfellow, and Taylor, as if their power of original production was exhausted, turned to translation; Sidney Lanier endeavored to express the soul of music in words, and prosecuted the study of poetic technique with all the zeal and more than the success of Poe; the didactic novel was continued by Holland and Roe; and genre fiction has undergone of late a remarkable development, — for with the decline of sectional feeling general interest in every section has sprung up.

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animal and still-life studies, indicate that art in America has rounded its cycle, and that its history may now be studied to advantage.

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